

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 99-78

March 17, 1999

LIGHTSHIP TELECOM, LLC.
Petition for Finding of Public
Convenience and Necessity to
Provide Service as an Interexchange
Telephone Utility

ORDER GRANTING AUTHORITY
TO PROVIDE INTEREXCHANGE
SERVICE AND APPROVING
SCHEDULE OF RATES AND
TERMS AND CONDITIONS

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

In this Order, the Commission grants Lightship Telecom, LLC. (LST or Company) the authority to provide interexchange service throughout the State of Maine and approves the Company's Terms and Conditions and Rate Schedules as filed on February 4, 1999 (pp. 1-41). Pursuant to Chapter 280, §§ 11 and 12, we exempt LST from the requirements of Chapter 210, *Uniform System of Accounts*, and 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 707 and 708, subject to the conditions described below.

I. APPROVAL OF APPLICATION TO SERVE

On February 4, 1999, LST applied for authority to operate in Maine pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 2102 and 2105. 35-A M.R.S.A. § 2105 requires us to find that the public convenience and necessity require another utility to serve where another utility is already authorized or is providing the same or similar service, before we grant approval under section 2102 for an additional public utility to provide service.

47 U.S.C. § 253(a), enacted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, states:

(a) In General. No State or local statute or regulation, or other State or local legal requirement, may prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting the ability of any entity to provide any interstate or intrastate telecommunication service.

47 U.S.C. § 253(b) states, however:

(b) State Regulatory Authority. Nothing in this section shall affect the ability of a State to impose, on a competitively neutral basis and consistent with section 254, requirements necessary to preserve and advance universal service, protect the public safety and welfare, ensure the continued quality of telecommunications services, and safeguard the rights of consumers.

We find that granting LST the authority to provide interexchange service will not impede the preservation or advancement of the public interest goals or policies stated in section 253(b). LST's application provides reasonable information indicating that its financial and management capabilities are adequate to provide interexchange services in Maine.

II. APPROVAL OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND RATE SCHEDULES

We allow the terms and conditions filed by LST to go into effect. LST used the Commission's expedited process for approval. That process includes standard terms and conditions that comply with Maine law and the Commission's Rules. We have reviewed the Company's terms and conditions and find that they appear to comply with Maine law and the Commission's Rules. Nevertheless, if there is any conflict between a provision in LST's terms and conditions and the Commission's Rules or a statute, the rule or statute will govern.

In general, the Commission believes that a competitive telecommunications market results in services and rates that benefit the public. We believe that the acceptability of LST's services and rates in the market provides an adequate test of the reasonableness of the Company's rates. Accordingly, we allow the rates proposed by LST to go into effect.

III. WAIVERS; REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to sections 11(A) and 12(A) of Chapter 280, LST is exempt from Chapter 210 of the Commission's Rules, which governs telephone utility accounting and annual financial reports, and from 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 707 and 708, which governs approvals for reorganizations and contracts with affiliated interests. However, as required by Chapter 280, § 11(A), LST must report its annual intrastate gross operating revenues and its annual intrastate minutes of use for the purpose of determining its regulatory assessment.¹ Pursuant to Chapter 280, § 11(B), LST

shall maintain records sufficient to identify and to allow auditing of traffic volumes, intrastate interexchange billings for both retail and wholesale services, and all information that is necessary to calculate access or interconnection charges in accordance with this Chapter. Those records shall be maintained for a minimum of 2 calendar years.

¹The Commission mails the annual reporting forms to carriers in January of each year. The completed forms are due by April 1 of each year.

Pursuant to Chapter 280, § 12, the exemption from the affiliated interest approval requirements of 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 707 and 708 is subject to the notice requirements contained in Chapter 280, § 12(B) and (C) and in the ordering paragraphs below.

IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

LST shall comply with all applicable rules of the Commission and statutes of the State of Maine, including the customer notification rule described in Ordering Paragraph 5.

V. ORDERING PARAGRAPHS

Accordingly, we

1. Grant, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 2102 and 2105, the request of LST to provide interexchange service throughout the State of Maine;
2. Approve LST's proposed Terms and Conditions and Rate Schedules (pages 1-41); those Schedules shall be effective on March 17, 1999;
3. Exempt LST from the requirements of Chapter 210 of the Commission's Rules, except that it must report certain revenue and minutes of use information, as required by Chapter 280, § 11(A), on or before April 1 of each year;
4. Exempt LST from the approval requirements of 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 707 and 708, but LST shall provide notice to the Commission of any reorganization, as defined in 35-A M.R.S.A. § 707(1)(A), that results in a merger, sale or transfer of a controlling interest of LST or of any entity that owns more than 50% of LST. The notice required by this subsection shall be filed within 10 days following any reorganization described herein, as required by Chapter 280, § 12(B). As required by Chapter 280, § 12(C), LST shall also provide notice of any other changes in the name under which it does business (d/b/a), any change of the location of its business office, and change of its contact person. LST shall provide the Administrative Director of the Commission with notice of any of the changes described within 30 days following the change. If necessary, LST shall amend its rate schedules and terms and conditions to reflect any change in identity; and
5. Direct that LST shall comply with all applicable rules of the Commission, including the requirement in Chapter 280, § 10 that interexchange carriers provide notice to all affected customers of an increase to any rate that is greater than 20%.

Dated at Augusta, Maine this 17th day of March, 1999.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director